9: Thomas T-5 (1951-1955)1959
FX10 Bushmen FX10
GiKwe



of the old women, Dasina, who was Tsetchwe's mother, inhaled too deeply and began to faint. Tsetchwe half turned her mother so that everyone would not see her, and, putting an arm around her for support, let the old woman lean on her shoulder. Our interpreter laughed, and Tsetchwe turned to glare. Tsetchwe's back was exactly like her mother's, broad but curved in at the waist, the old woman's a little bloated but Tsetchwe's young and strong.

Another old woman was smoking, too, puffing on a short, wide pipe cut from a leg bone of some large antelope, so big that she had to stuff one end with grass to keep the tobacco inside. She almost unhinged her jaw each time she puffed. She would inhale and spit, cough, and inhale again without a sign of dizziness, and when she saw Dasina faint she too laughed out loudly. Her name, she told us, was Twikwe.

Twikwe was skinny and tall as a man, with long, lanky arms that she flung about in the air, gesturing, and long legs that jerked when she walked. She wore only a short piece of leather that reached from her waist to her thighs, and we could see that she was wrinkled from head to foot, her skin hanging in long, vertical wrinkles down her thighs and belly, like an old apple that has dried. She talked incessantly and loudly, always opening and closing her mouth, and she joked, for Ukwane and the young boys near her laughed at everything she said. She was telling how her husband had outdistanced her as they were running away and was surely running still. Every now and then she stopped her talk to shout out to him, jeering, saying that he was depriving himself of tobacco and should come back; then everyone would listen, but no sound came from him, no answer. He never did come back, and in the weeks we were there we never saw him. Perhaps he was running away from Twikwe, for we later learned that he was living in a valley with his other wife.

13: Marshall E-5 (1952-1955) 1962 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



776 It was characteristic of the /Kung that none of the medicine men whom we knew
756 claimed to have seen ≠*Gao!na*. They were not great enough, they said. The /Kung
[156] do not wish to risk drawing upon themselves the invidious attention of mortals or the whimsical displeasure of the gods by setting themselves up noticeably before others. Some said that they had been told by their parents of only one great medicine man among their neighbouring bands who had seen ≠*Gao!na*. His name was Gao. He died long ago.

776 Although ≠*Gao!na* comes only to the great medicine men 'in the flesh', so to speak,
787 he appears to anyone in dreams and 'helps all his people'. A hunter said that
[224] ≠*Gao!na* stands beside one in one's dream and says, 'You have been walking and walking and you got nothing. Today I shall give you meat.' The hunter gets up and goes out on to the veld. He sees an animal and shoots it. ≠*Gao!na* may say, on the other hand, 'These days you will not find an animal even if you hunt'; and it will be the truth. He may tell you in a dream where to find honey in a tree or where to
[756 find an ant hill. He gives power to the medicine men in dreams and also medicine
533] songs. A medicine woman described vividly how he had taught her a medicine song which she then gave to her people. He stood beside her instructing her to sing the song over and over until she had learned it.

### //*Gauwa*, The Lesser God

776 Among the Nyae Nyae /Kung the word //*Gauwa* has three interpretations. First,
[775] a //*gauwa* is the spirit of a dead person; the spirits of the dead in the plural are //*gauwasi*. Second, the Nyae Nyae /Kung, as we have said, call the children born to the gods 'little //*gauwasi*'. Third, they apply the name //*Gauwa* to both the great and the lesser god. It is one of the seven names they have in common. In the current beliefs of the Nyae Nyae /Kung there is not a being called //*Gauwa* who is a separate entity apart from the great and the lesser god.

Among other Bushmen and the Hottentots, //*Gauwa* was a being distinct from the other being who is variously named *Hishe*, *Huwe*, *Xu*, &c. As I interpret the present belief of the /Kung, the lesser god is that old, traditional //*Gauwa*. He has been transmuted, however, from the old image to a new one, as the old protagonist, ≠*Gao!na*, was transmuted into the great god. //*Gauwa*'s name has been attributed to the great god as the great god's names have been attributed to him. The two beings remain separate entities in the */gu!na–/guma* relationship.

I base the interpretation that the lesser god is the traditional //*Gauwa* on the facts that many of his attributes are the same as or similar to those of the traditional being and that I did not hear people use any other name for him but //*Gauwa* and did not once hear the name //*Gauwa* used for the great god when people spoke spontaneously of him, although they insisted that it was one of the seven names which the gods have in common.

Excerpts from Schapera indicate that //*Gauwa* was generally the destroyer. Vedder reports that the /Kung at Tsumeb expect only evil from him and think of him as opposed to *Huwe*. But Lebzelter's Eastern Kung believed that he was good as well as evil, that he helped hunters, and some thought he was the creator. 'He is everywhere and moves between heaven and earth on cords.'[1] By the Heikum also he was

[1] Schapera, op. cit., p. 188.

13: Marshall E-5 (1952-1955) 1962 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung



Gam when four bands danced together. Demi was the smallest Bushman we had seen in the region. He was bedecked with many beads and walked with a prance like a bantam cock. He had seen *//Gauwa* in the darkness, he told us. He had confronted him and driven him off with imprecations and sticks. I asked him to tell me what *//Gauwa* looked like. *//Gauwa* is as big as a mouse and has legs like a mouse, he promptly told me, showing me a pipe about four inches long to demonstrate *//Gauwa*'s size. (Demi did not say *//Gauwa* was a mouse; he said ' as big as '.) *//Gauwa* is covered all over with short yellow hairs. This bright, prancing little man had seen a little god. None of the other medicine men saw *//Gauwa* as small as that.

Gao Scarf sees *//Gauwa* regularly. He is like a man in form, but not such as we. He is about two and a half feet tall. (Gao demonstrated with a stick.) He has yellow hair over his whole body. He does not speak as we speak. He says, ' *hu hu hu* ', like the medicine men when they are performing a ceremony, but softly. Only medicine men hear him and understand him.

Another Gao said that *//Gauwa* is about a foot tall and the colour of a wart hog. He has the form of a man.

When Gao Medicine is in trance, he often sees *//Gauwa*. He is a being about the height of a guinea-fowl, grey in colour like the bark of the ubiquitous camelthorn tree. But to Gao, *//Gauwa* is not clearly visible; he is like a mist.

/Ti/kay claimed to me that he was ' young in medicine ' and had never seen *//Gauwa*, as he had claimed that he had never seen *≠Gao/na*. This was an engaging torsion of the truth. I myself had many times seen /Ti/kay appear to confront *//Gauwa* during his curing. /Ti/kay was to me the most spectacular of all the medicine men in performing the ceremony. He did not fear to scream into the shadows, ' *Nonabe!* You have brought a bad medicine. It is going to kill someone. Take it back.' The people, I am sure, did not believe that he was ' young in medicine ' and that he did not see *//Gauwa* when the other medicine men did. /Ti/kay, as I think is apparent even in these brief accounts of him, was something of a deviant. I believe that he contradicted other informants because his nature habitually drove him to oppose others and that, at the same time, he deliberately and rationally tried to deceive me and lead me astray, first for one reason, then another. He was jealous of our harmonious relations with ≠Toma and Gao Medicine. We were pleased and grateful to them when they would work with us and he refused, and this made him spiteful. Also, due to some influence which we do not know about, he may actually believe some of the things he told us, such as that *//Gauwa* lives in the east instead of the west. We were never certain about him.

### The *//Gauwasi*

The Nyae Nyae /Kung believe strongly and vividly in the existence of spirits of the dead, the *//gauwasi*, who live immortal lives in the sky with *≠Gao/na*, doing his bidding. The *//gauwasi* come to earth and enter into the affairs of men when *≠Gao/na* so commands them. The /Kung fear them, pray to them to invoke their mercy or sympathy, exhort them in anger. The concept of having special relations with their own ancestors or of worshipping ancestors is lacking.

The people claim that they fear to speak of the *//gauwasi* lest they call attention to themselves or offend the spirits. They say it is a ' death thing to speak of them much ',

513 882 together may sleep near the parents of one of them, but not exactly at the parents' fire.

855 857 Within the frame of protectiveness the parents are very permissive and make few, if any, demands on their children. With no houses and few utensils, there are not many household tasks to assign. Children are not sent off alone to do any of the daily work of fetching water or wood or [136] gathering veldkos. Although lions, leopards, and hyenas tend to mind their own business, they are present in the country and share the water holes with the Bushmen. Poisonous snakes are a very real danger. Furthermore, as the hunters say, it takes a lifetime to learn the country well enough not to be easily lost in the featureless grass and brush. The adults do not let their children out of their sight. In their parents' presence the children imitate adult activities in vital, active play, very engaging to watch, and [868] participate in actual work as they are able. The adults pause to show them how to hold a digging stick, or a toy bow or drill, so that play and learning merge.

524 857 [512] The !Kung have a rich variety of lively group games, with pantomime, singing, dancing, and other rhythmic movements, that children and adults together enjoy playing in the werf when the heat of the day is over. In most of their games boys and girls play separately, but they dance and sing together.

861 !Kung children are never harshly punished. One father said that if he had a boy who was quarrelsome or who disobeyed the rules—for instance, the absolute rule of the !Kung against stealing food or possessions—what he would do about it would be to keep the boy right with him until he learned 857 sense. The children on their part do not often do things that call forth 156 punishment. They usually fall in with group life and do what is expected of them without apparent uncertainty, frustration, or fear; and expressions of resistance or hostility toward their parents, the group, or each other are very much the exception.

88 [173] PUBERTY • When the fathers of the present old men were young men, the Nyae Nyae !Kung adopted the ceremony of the *Choma*, which they said was taught to them by a !Kung man who had married into another [171] language group in the south. The *Choma* resembles some Bantu initiation [562] ceremonies at certain points. The men who have had the ceremony and are therefore *Choma* owners take the boys to a place far enough from the werf to be out of hearing of the women, who, the !Kung claim, would die if they [535] heard some of the *Choma* sounds. The men and boys dance all night for several nights to special *Choma* songs with special rhythms that differ from [534] those of the other dances. A secret bull-roarer plays a part in the ceremony. [302] At the end the boys are scarified with a vertical line down the middle of [304] their foreheads and are given a special *Choma* haircut. Circumcision or other genital operations are not practiced by the !Kung.